

Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (previously presented): A data switch comprising:

means for receiving a connection request;
means for identifying a protocol associated with the connection request;
means for dynamically bonding the identified protocol to a port, the dynamic bonding allowing the port to transmit packets according to a first protocol during a first communication session and according to a second protocol during a second communication session; and
means for formatting the packet according to the identified protocol.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The data switch of claim 1 further comprising a cache for storing encapsulation information generated based on the identified protocol.

Claims 3-4 (cancelled)

Claim 5 (previously presented): A method for forwarding data blocks comprising:

receiving a connection request;
identifying a protocol associated with the connection request;
dynamically bonding the identified protocol to the input port, the dynamic bonding allowing the port to transmit packets according to a first protocol during a first communication session and according to a second protocol during a second communication session; and
formatting the packet according to the identified protocol.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The method of claim 5 further comprising:
generating encapsulation information based on the identified protocol; and
storing the encapsulation information in a cache.

Claims 7-8 (cancelled)

Claim 9 (previously presented): The data switch of claim 1, wherein the protocol is a layer two protocol.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The method of claim 5, wherein the protocol is a two protocol.

Claim 11 (previously presented): A network switch comprising:
means for establishing a communication session with an end device;
means for identifying a communication protocol associated with the communication session;
means for dynamically configuring a port with the identified communication protocol for a duration of the communication session, the port being capable of being dynamically configured with a different communication protocol upon expiration of the communication session;
means for formatting a data packet based on the identified communication protocol;
and
a switching interface coupled to the means for formatting for forwarding the formatted data packet.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The network switch of claim 11, wherein the communication protocol is a layer two communication protocol.

Claim 13 (previously presented): A method for forwarding data packets comprising:

- establishing a communication session with an end device;
- identifying a communication protocol associated with the communication session;
- dynamically configuring a port with the identified communication protocol for a duration of the communication session, the port being capable of being dynamically configured with a different communication protocol upon expiration of the communication session;
- formatting a data packet based on the identified communication protocol; and
- forwarding the formatted data packet via the port.

Claim 14 (previously presented): The method of claim 13, wherein the communication protocol is a layer two communication protocol.

Claim 15 (new): A method for forwarding data packets comprising the steps of:

(a) establishing a communication session having a duration with an end device, wherein the communication session is via a port and wherein the establishing step further comprises the steps of:

(i) determining the layer two protocol associated with the communication session; and

(ii) linking the determined layer two protocol with the port for the duration of the communication session, the port being capable of being linked with a different layer two protocol upon expiration of the communication session; and

(b) formatting a data packet based on the determined layer two protocol; and

(c) forwarding the formatted data packet via the port.